(b) if so, whether there are plans to achieve this by raising average per hectare wheat yield to 3 tonnes as against earlier average of 2.8 tonnes and also increasing the area under wheat to 28 million hectares as against last years' acreage of 27.5 million hectares;

(c) whether country produced an alltime high 80.58 million tonnes wheat in 2008-09; and

(d) if so, to what extent these plans have borne fruits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (d) Government has taken several steps to tackle the impending situation to increase the area under rabi cultivation to compensate for likely losses in kharif 2009-10.

During National Conference on Agriculture for Rabi Campaign, 2009, it was agreed by all the States to increase the area under wheat for enhancing the production & productivity, thereby compensating the losses of kharif, 2009. Seed subsidy has been increased for wheat crop from Rs.500/- to Rs.700/- per quintal for Rabi 2009-10 season. State Government have given flexibility to utilize the funds under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes and age limit norms of certified seed of wheat varieties have been relaxed. Additional allocations of rust-resistant and terminal heat-tolerant varieties of wheat minikits have been made. Availability and supply of essential inputs such as fertilizers, additional power for irrigation etc. have been ensured in coordination with the States and various Central Ministries.

Sowing of Wheat is in progress in all the wheat growing states of the country. The area coverage of wheat reported as on 3.12.2009 was about 167.20 lakh hectares against coverage of 162.40 lakh hectares during corresponding period of last year. Regarding the production of wheat in the current year, it is too early to assess the estimate at this stage. There is record production of wheat during 2008-09 to the tune of 80.58 million tonnes (as per 4th estimates).

Strategies to check suicide by farmers

2466. SHRI ISHWAR SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the incidents of suicide by farmers continue to increase in various parts of the country inspite of financial assistance provided to States to check such cases;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the assistance provided to State Governments to check incidents of suicides in various parts of the country are monitored by the Central Government; and

(d) if so, the strategies formulated to check rising cases of suicides by farmers in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (d) The incidents of suicide by farmers have been mainly reported from 31 districts spread over the the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Kerala. Besides, some cases of farmers' suicide were also reported by the State of Gujarat, Punjab and Tamil Nadu. To address the problem of suicide by farmers, in these 31 districts, the Government approved a rehabilitation package of Rs. 16978.69 crore in the year 2006. An amount of Rs.16953.04 crore *(i.e.* 99.8% of total package cost) has been released by Centre/State Governments and Banks in 4 States up to 30th September, 2009. It has been decided by the Government to extend the period for implementation of the non credit components of the package by 2 more years i.e. 30th September, 2011. There is an inbuilt mechanism for monitoring the Rehabilitation Package. The Ministry of Agriculture monitors the progress on a regular basis. Since implementation of the Rehabilitation Package the number of suicide by farmers are showing a declining trend in most of the States. A Statement showing number of suicides by farmers on account of agrarian reasons as per reports received from the State Governments is given in the Statement *(See* below).

As reported by the State Governments broadly the reasons for committing suicide are crop failure, indebtedness, drought and socio- economic reasons. However, the Veeresh Committee (in the context of the Karnataka Farmers' suicide) has appropriately concluded that connecting the spate of suicides directly to any single cause would be erroneous. Suicide in its content is strictly a personal decision and the post suicide search for causes gives only circumstantial evidence. Typical social factors like family support, failure of social institutions, habits, alcoholism, social security, introvert nature and intra family problems are some of the critical social issues that have affected the victims to take such an extreme step.

In order to enhance the economic viability of farming and to address the problem of indebtedness of farmers, the Government of India implemented a Debt waiver and Debt Relief scheme, 2008 in all districts of the country. As per provisional figures, a total of 3.01 crores small and marginal farmers and 0.67 crore other farmers have benefitted from the scheme involving debt waiver and debt relief to the tune of Rs. 65,318.33 crores, as their line of credit has been declogged due to clearing off of their principal and interest liabilities.

The National Policy for Farmers, 2007 has also definite provisions to improve economic viability of farming and a number of Plan schemes and programmes such as National Food Security Mission, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National Horticulture Mission, Macro Management of Agriculture, Integrated Nutrient and Pest Management and Support to Agriculture Extension Services etc. are being implemented across the country.

Statement

Cases of suicide by farmers as per reports received from State Govts.

Sl.No.	Name of the State	Period	Eligible cases i.e. suicides due to agrarian distress	Eligible cases i.e. suicides due to agrarian distress in Package Districts
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2006	530	519
		2007	490	482
		2008	390	384
		2009 (upto16.11.09)	77	75
2.	Karnataka	2006-07	176	67
		2007-08	182	68
		2008-09	143	NA
		2009-10 (upto 31.8.09)	14	NA
3.	Maharashtra	2006	1028	575
		2007	590	233
		2008	627	294
		2009 (upto 15.11.09)	259^	144^^
4.	Kerala	2006	112	NA
		2007	68	NA
		2008	22	NA
		2009 (upto 31.08.09)	02	NA
5	Tamil Nadu	2006	01	*
		2007	01	
		2008	01	
		2009 (upto 31.10.09)	Nil	
6.	Punjab	2006	19	*
		2007	24	
		2008	10	
		2009 (upto 31.10.09)	18	
7.	Gujarat	2006	04	*
		2007	04	
		2008	01	
		2009 (upto 30.06.09)	00	

^ 408 cases of farmers' suicide are under investigation as reported *vide* Govt. of Maharashtra fax dated 19.11.2009 of which ^^217 cases relates to package districts.

Sl.No.	Name of State	Date of Report	No. of Suicide
8.	Assam	12.12.2007	Nil
9.	Aurnachal Pradesh	17.08.2007	Nil
10.	Bihar	14.05.2008	Nil
11.	Chhattisgarh	31.07.2009	Nil
12.	Goa	31.10.2009	Nil
13.	Haryana	16.11.2009	Nil
14.	Himachal Pradesh	19.11.2009	Nil
15.	J&K	18.11.2009	Nil
16.	Jharkhand	25.04.2008	Nil
17.	Manipur	19.11.2009	Nil
18.	Meghalaya	31.07.2009	Nil
19.	Madhya Pradesh	24.11.2009	Nil
20.	Mizoram	23.07.2009	Nil
21.	Nagaland	23.11.2009	Nil
22.	Orissa	23.11.2009	Nil*
23.	Rajasthan	04.12.2007	Nil
24.	Sikkim	21.11.2009	Nil
25.	Tripura	25.03.2008	Nil
26.	Uttar Pradesh	20.11.2009	Nil
27.	Uttrakhand	08.05.2008	Nil
28.	West Bengal	31.10.2009	Nil
29.	Admn. of Andaman & Nicobar	19.11.2009	Nil
30.	Govt. of NCT of Delhi	28.9.2007	Nil
31.	Admn. of Daman & Diu	15.7.2009	Nil
32.	Admn. of Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1.7.2008	Nil
33.	Admn. of Lakshadweep	19.11.2007	Nil
34.	Admn. of Pondicherry	23.11.2009	Nil
35.	Admn. of Chandigarh	15.11.2009	Nil

*23 cases of alleged suicide by farmers have been reported in Orissa, but the State Government has not been able to ascertain so far whether anyone or more out of these alleged suicides have been caused due to agrarian distress. However, investigations by the State Police are going on this regard.